

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 (ISO) W
----- 019398

R 220842Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3589

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MILI AO

SUBJECT: TIT-FOR-TAT: FNLA MOVES TO ELIMINATE MPLA IN ZAIRE
DISTRICT

CINCLANT AND CINCEUR FOR POLADS

1. A CONGEN OFFICER RECENTLY SPOKE TO THE ACTING GOVERNOR
OF ZAIRE DISTRICT, WHO SUPPLIED THE FOLLOWING
DESCRIPTIONS OF THE RECENT FIGHTING IN HIS DISTRICT:

A. IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF MAY 3, FNLA LAUNCHED
SIMULTANEOUS ATTACKS UPON MPLA GARRISONS IN SAO SALVADOR,
TOMBOCO AND AMBRIZETE. CONSISTENT WITH THE STYLE OF WARFARE
SO FAR PRACTICED IN ANGOLA, THE ATTACKS WERE INITIALLY MADE WITH
MORTARS, SMALL ROCKETS AND AUTOMATIC WEAPONS. ONLY IN TOMBOCO DID
FNLA MOUNT A GROUND ASSAULT ON THE SMALL 18 MAN MPLA GARRISON.

B. IN SAO SALVADOR FNLA FOLLOWED UP THE ATTACK BY ROUNDING
UP MPLA'S DELEGATION CHIEF IN THE CITY, ITS TWO TOP
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MILITARY LEADERS WHO WERE CAUGHT AWAY FROM THEIR BARRACKS AND ALL

MPLA SYMPATHIZERS, WHICH INCLUDED 90 PERCENT OF THE CIVIL SERVANTS IN THAT SMALL DISTRICT CAPITAL. THE GOVERNOR AND THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY COMMANDER IN SAO SALVADOR LATER NEGOTIATED THE RELEASE OF THE FNLA'S PRISONERS BUT, ODDLY ENOUGH, THE MPLA DELEGATION CHIEF AND THE TWO MILITARY COMMANDERS "DISAPPEARED" AFTER THEIR RELEASE. FNLA CLAIMS NO KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR WHEREABOUTS. BY ANOTHER STRANGE COINCIDENCE THE 7 MPLA SURVIVORS OF FNLA'S ATTACK IN TOMBOCO WHO WERE SENT BY TRUCK TO SAO SALVADOR ALSO FAILED TO ARRIVE AND HAVE NEVER BEEN HEARD OF AGAIN. IN AMBRIZETE THE PORTUGUESE ARMY PREVENTED FNLA FROM ARRESTING ANYONE BY NEGOTIATING A COMPLETE MPLA WITHDRAWAL FROM THAT TOWN. TOTAL KILLED OR MISSING IN THESE THREE TOWNS IS ABOUT 30.

C. IN THE FRONTIER TOWN OF NOQUI FNLA SIMPLY DISARMED MPLA TROOPS AND ORDERED THEM TO LEAVE VIA THE NEARBY ZAIRIAN PORT OF MATADI. THE PORTUGUESE INTERVENED AND THE MPLA TROOPS WERE CONVOYED TO SAO SALVADOR WHERE THEY WERE FLOWN TO LUANDA ON A PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE PLANE.

D. NO ATTACKS TOOK PLACE ON THE ONLY REMAINING MPLA GARRISON IN THE DISTRICT AT SANTO ANTONIO DE ZAIRE. (MANY AMERICAN OIL WORKERS LIVE IN SANTO ANTONIO.)

2. THERE IS NO DOUBT FNLA'S ATTACKS WERE IN RETALIATION FOR MPLA'S SUCCESSFUL ASSAULTS UPON FNLA DELEGATIONS IN LUANDA DURING THE LATE APRIL VIOLENCE. HOWEVER THE PURPOSE AND RESULT OF THE ATTACKS SEEM TO HAVE BEEN TO CLEAR MPLA FORCES FROM THE SAO SALVADOR - AMBRIZETE ROAD, OPEN UP THE PORT OF AMBRIZETE TO FNLA SUPPLIES AND PROTECT THE SUPPLY ROUTE TO BOTH SAO SALVADOR AND THE NEW FNLA BASE AT QUIENDE (SEPTEL), AS WELL AS TO ELIMINATE AS MUCH MPLA PRESENCE IN ZAIRE DISTRICT AS POSSIBLE.

3. NEARLY ALL THE CIVIL SERVANTS IN ZAIRE DISTRICT INCLUDING THE DISTRICT GOVERNOR HAVE FLED WITH THEIR FAMILIES TO LUANDA. THEY WERE MPLA SYMPATHIZERS AND NO LONGER FELT SECURE IN FNLA'S STRONGHOLD. MPLA HAS NOT YET SENT A REPLACEMENT DELEGATION CHIEF OR MILITARY COMMANDER FOR ITS SAO SALVADOR OPERATION - ONE DOES NOT IMAGINE THERE ARE MANY VOLUNTEERS FOR THE ASSIGNMENT - AND THE ACTING GOVERNOR FEELS MPLA WILL SHORTLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EVACUATE THEIR 120 TROOPS TO A MORE SECURE LOCALE IN LOWER ANGOLA.

4. MPLA STILL HAS A PRESENCE IN SANTO ANTONIO DO ZAIRE AND, CURIOUSLY, A BURGEONING BASE AT BENDE (50 MILES EAST OF SANTO ANTONIO DE ZAIRE) WHERE 200-300 MPLA TROOPS FROM CABINDA ARE BEING GARRISONED. AS THE ONLY SURFACE ROUTE TO LUANDA FOR MPLA NOW RUNS THROUGH FNLA STRONGHOLDS, THEIR TROOPS ARE DEPENDENT

ON SEA EVACUATION AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A FURTHER FNLA PUSH
TO CLEAN OUT MPLA COMPLETELY FROM ZAIRE DISTRICT IS A DISTINCT
POSSIBILITY.
PORTER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PERSONNEL, LIBERATION FRONTS, UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE, POLITICAL SITUATION, SELFDETERMINATION, CASUALTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LUANDA00627
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750180-0257
From: LUANDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750528/aaaaayoe.tel
Line Count: 119
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <11 JUN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TIT-FOR-TAT: FNLA MOVES TO ELIMINATE MPLA IN ZAIRE DISTRICT
TAGS: MILI, AO, FNLA, MPLA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006